United Nations A/64/124 (Part I)

General Assembly

Distr.: General
6 July 2009
English
Original: Arabic/English/
French/Spanish

Sixty-fourth session
Items 91 and 98 of the preliminary list*

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Observations	2
III.	Replies received from Governments	3
	Cuba	3
	Egypt	4
	Islamic Republic of Iran	6
	Japan	10
	Lebanon	12
	Mali	12
	Mexico	13
	Nicaragua	13
	Qatar	14

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09-39249 (E) 270709 300709

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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 63/38 of 2 December 2008, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 46/30 of 6 December 1991, taking into account the evolving situation in the region, and to seek from those States their views on the measures outlined in chapters III and IV of the study annexed to his report of 10 October 1990 (A/45/435) or other relevant measures, in order to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In paragraph 11 of the same resolution, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its sixty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. On 11 February 2009, a note verbale was sent to all Member States drawing their attention to paragraph 10 of resolution 63/38 and seeking their views on the matter. Replies, which have been received from Cuba, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Lebanon, Mali, Mexico, Nicaragua and Qatar, are reproduced in section III below. Additional replies received from Member States will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Observations

3. The issue of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East remains important. It is recalled that at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in New York from 4 to 15 May 2009, States parties reiterated in their statements their support for the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, reaffirmed the importance of the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and recognized that the resolution remained valid until its goals and objectives were achieved. Furthermore, the Arab Summit, held in Doha from 30 to 31 March 2009, issued a resolution emphasizing that the success of the 2010 NPT Review Conference requires the implementation of the 1995 Middle East resolution and agreement on adopting practical and well-defined steps towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

4. The Secretary-General has continued to carry out various consultations with concerned parties within and outside the region in order to explore further ways and means of promoting the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

5. The Secretary-General reaffirms the urgent need for a just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and expresses concern that a further deterioration in the situation may occur if progress is not made towards this objective. He believes that events on the ground over the past year, which included a major armed crisis in Gaza, the discontinuation of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations undertaken in the Annapolis framework, and limited progress towards Palestinian unity underscored

the need for a renewed effort to resume direct talks on a two-State solution and comprehensive regional peace. He welcomed the renewed commitment by the United States to the Middle East peace process and joined with the Quartet, the League of Arab States, and the broader international community in urging the parties to respect and act upon their prior commitments and to expedite the implementation of the resolutions 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), recently adopted in this context by the Security Council. The Secretary-General calls upon all concerned parties within and outside the region to resume dialogue with a view to creating stable security conditions and an eventual settlement that would facilitate the process of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. The Secretary-General reiterates the continued readiness of the United Nations to provide any assistance deemed helpful in that regard.

III. Replies received from Governments

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[11 June 2009]

1. Cuba has repeatedly stated, in international forums, its position of principle concerning nuclear disarmament and all aspects of non-proliferation, which is one of the highest priorities of Cuba's foreign policy. It has also expressed its concern about the threat which the continued existence of nuclear weapons poses to humanity, stressing the importance of pursuing non-proliferation efforts in parallel with efforts towards general and complete disarmament, under strict international monitoring.

2. In order to achieve this objective, it is imperative that the nuclear-weapon Powers fulfil their unequivocal commitment to eliminate their entire nuclear arsenals, which pose a serious threat to human survival.

3. The existence of nuclear-weapon-free zones represents an important contribution to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and achieving nuclear disarmament. It is important that such zones be formed on the basis of agreements freely negotiated between the States of the region concerned and that they include mechanisms for cooperation between the States parties and signatories in order to guarantee that the countries remain seriously committed to that goal.

4. Cuba fully supports the proposal to make the Middle East region a nuclear-weapon-free zone, in line with the wishes expressed by the overwhelming majority of the countries in the area and in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and resolution 687 (1991), paragraph 14, as well as other resolutions adopted by consensus by the General Assembly.

5. The establishment of such a zone, in addition to making an important contribution to the achievement of nuclear disarmament, would represent a milestone in the Middle East peace process. Israel, the only country in the region that has neither become nor stated its intention to become a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, should renounce the possession of nuclear weapons and place all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, in line with Security Council resolution 487 (1981), in

order to comply promptly and unconditionally with the just demands of the international community.

6. Together with the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Cuba reiterates the call for a complete and total ban on the transfer to Israel of nuclear equipment, information, material or facilities, as well as relevant resources or implements and the provision of nuclear-related scientific or technological assistance. In addition, it expresses its concern about the continued assistance and access afforded to Israeli nuclear scientists, which may have potentially serious negative consequences for security in the region.

7. It is common knowledge that Israel's ability to act with impunity in this regard is due in large part to the protection it enjoys from the Government of the United States of America in the Security Council and other international forums. That country has paralysed the Security Council by exercising its veto power 31 times against draft resolutions relating to the question of Palestine and by repeatedly threatening to make use of this antidemocratic and outdated privilege.

8. The statements made by the Prime Minister of Israel on 12 December 2006, admitting that Israel is a nuclear-weapon State, are of grave concern. Israel's acquisition of nuclear capabilities represents a threat to the security of neighbouring States and to peace in the region, which is already in turmoil.

9. In view of the critical situation currently prevailing in the Middle East, Cuba reaffirms the ongoing responsibility of the United Nations, including the Security Council, with respect to peace and security in the region, including the resolution of the question of Palestine.

Egypt

[Original: English]
[1 June 2009]

1. The item entitled "Establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East" was first inscribed on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1974 at the request of Egypt and the Islamic Republic of Iran. While the General Assembly has adopted annually since 1980 a resolution calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, Egypt continued to pursue consistently the objective of ridding the Middle East of the threat of nuclear weapons.

2. Egypt notes with grave concern that while all States of the Middle East have become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Israel persists in ignoring repeated calls for its adherence to the Treaty and the placement of its nuclear facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, therefore perpetuating a dangerous imbalance, and a threat to regional and international peace and security.

3. Recognizing such a threat to international and regional peace and security, and while reaffirming the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, the States parties to the NPT reaffirmed unanimously at the 2000 Review Conference the importance of Israel's accession as a non-nuclear-weapon State to the NPT and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. Indeed, in its final document, the 2000 Review Conference:

> "Recalls that in paragraph 4 of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, the Conference 'calls upon all States in the Middle East that have not yet done so, without exception, to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and to place their nuclear facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards'. The Conference notes, in this connection, that the report of the United Nations Secretariat on the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East (NPT/CONF.2000/7) states that several States have acceded to the Treaty and that, with these accessions, all States of the region of the Middle East, with the exception of Israel, are States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Conference welcomes the accession of these States and reaffirms the importance of Israel's accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East" (NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Parts I and II), part I, section entitled "Article VII and the security of non-nuclear-weapon States", para. 16).

4. In addition to urgent calls for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, inter alia, in the context of the NPT review process, the IAEA and the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council called upon Israel to "urgently place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency" (Security Council resolution 487 (1981)) and recalled "the objective of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East" (Security Council resolution 687 (1991)).

5. Egypt firmly believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in areas of tension and conflict does indeed contribute significantly to easing tensions, confidence-building, preventing conflicts and developing peaceful relations and mutual cooperation. Egypt believes that the only prerequisite for the commencement of negotiations on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is the existence of political will, both in the region, and among parties that have a direct stake in the region's security and stability.

6. While Egypt continues to table a General Assembly resolution entitled "Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", it notes with regret that the resolution's adoption by consensus is not complimented by an equally consensual commitment to its implementation. Indeed, not all of the States members of the United Nations seem committed to acting effectively with a view to ridding the Middle East of the threat of nuclear weapons. Few concrete steps, if any, have been taken with the aim of realizing the objectives of this resolution.

7. The commencement of negotiations on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would represent a serious breakthrough in the efforts geared towards regaining security in the region, which is currently facing an Israeli nuclear threat that is provoking even further proliferation risks and challenges.

8. The international community has given much attention to recent cases of proliferation concern, sometimes seeking new approaches and ways of devoting significant resources to the task. Meanwhile little effort has been excreted in addressing the Israeli nuclear threat to the Middle East region.

9. Cognizant of the fact that the continued Israeli nuclear threat to the region of the Middle East and subsequent developments might render the objective of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region untenable, Egypt continues to pursue its efforts towards the early realization of that goal in all relevant regional and international force.

10. In this regard, Egypt has proposed several measures within the current view cycle of the NPT aiming at the speedy implementation of practical measures leading to the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

11. Egypt expresses its intent to actively engage and cooperate with all parties in an effort to safeguard the Middle East against all nuclear proliferation-related threats through a comprehensive and balanced approach that can ensure the security of all States of the region against nuclear dangers through the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons.

Islamic Republic of Iran

[Original: English]
[1 June 2009]

1. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone is a recognized regional instrument to strengthen regional and international peace and security. More importantly, this idea plays an instrumental role in preventing the threat of nuclear war. Such an arrangement is in conformity with the provisions of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

2. More than three decades have elapsed since the introduction of this idea for the very first time by Iran in 1974. The resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which have been constantly adopted without a vote by the General Assembly since 1980, represent the significance of the realization of this noble idea in the vital region of the Middle East. The following paragraphs list the achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran in fulfilling the principles and objectives of the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, at three levels: national, regional and international measurements, with conclusions on the way ahead.

National measures

3. The Islamic Republic of Iran, by renouncing the possession of nuclear weapons and placing its nuclear facilities under the safeguard system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has shown its resolute determination to achieve the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, such an act underscores the undiminished support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, with the ultimate objective of securing a world free of nuclear weapons.

4. The Islamic Republic of Iran ratified the statute of the IAEA in 1958 and subsequently signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1969, which its Parliament ratified in 1970. This process was furthered by the ratification of the IAEA Safeguards Agreement in 1973 and ultimately further

accomplished by the signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

5. In implementing its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, specifically articles II and III thereof, all nuclear facilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran are devoted to peaceful purposes and are under the full-scope safeguards of IAEA. Furthermore, in order to contribute to the realization of a world free of weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the Middle East, the Islamic Republic of Iran has also joined the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

6. Furthermore, having ratified all major weapons of mass destruction (WMD) treaties, namely the NPT, the CWC and the BWC, and fully complied with their provisions, the Islamic Republic of Iran supports the establishment of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the region of the Middle East and calls on all countries of the region to intensify their efforts for the elimination of WMD threats from the Middle East region. The Zionist regime, as the main obstacle to the realization of such a zone, must be compelled by the international community, especially the sponsors of the NPT 1995 Middle East resolution, to accede to the major WMD treaties, in particular the NPT.

Regional measures

7. While supporting all measures taken to date to regionally develop the idea of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America, the South Pacific region, Africa and South-East Asia, the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the establishment of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone located entirely in the northern hemisphere in its immediate neighbourhood, i.e., Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. The Islamic Republic of Iran firmly believes that such measures and attempts, if considered seriously and globally by the States, will be a step towards promoting international peace and security for the whole world and further strengthening the nuclear disarmament goal. Nevertheless, there are enough reasons to indicate that the establishment of such a zone would be more significant in the Middle East, especially in the present circumstances.

8. Notwithstanding the global attempts for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free-zone, particularly in the Middle East, it is regretful that after 30 years of the adoption of the General Assembly resolution, initially proposed by Iran, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, no progress has been achieved for its realization due to the intransigent policy of the Zionist regime. Owing to the non-adherence of this regime to the NPT, and more importantly, the refusal of this regime to place its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under the IAEA verification system, the realization of such a zone, as a lofty and long-sought aspiration of the countries in the region, has yet to be materialized. The irresponsible behaviour of this regime in this respect has put the establishment of such a zone in the region in the near future at serious doubt.

9. As the Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty signifies, after the accession of several countries to the treaty, all countries in the Middle East region, except for the Zionist regime, have become States parties to the Treaty. The Sixth Review Conference requested all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, the States of the Middle East and other interested States, to report through the Conference and the Chairmen of the

Preparatory Committee meetings to be held in advance of that Conference, on the steps that have been taken to promote the achievement of such a zone and the realization of the goals and objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

10. The next step is to take concrete measures towards securing the adherence of the Zionist regime to the NPT without any delay and without any condition as a non-nuclear-weapon party, and to place all its nuclear-related facilities under the IAEA verification system.

11. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/38 of 2 December 2008, the Secretary-General would inform the Assembly of the result of his consultations with the countries in the region on the realization of the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It is still our conviction that the Secretary-General should dispatch his special envoy to the countries in the region for the required consultations with those countries to facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. At present, the Zionist regime is the only non-party to the NPT in the region. Despite repeated calls by the international community, demonstrated in the resolution on the Middle East, adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, related resolutions of the General Assembly, IAEA and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, this regime, confident of the political and military support of the United States of America, has neither acceded to the NPT, nor placed its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards. The Zionist regime has not even declared its intention to accede to the Treaty. Its clandestine nuclear activities seriously threaten both regional peace and security and endanger the non-proliferation regime.

12. The atrocious attacks by the Israeli regime against its neighbouring people of Gaza during 22 days, from 27 December 2008 to 17 January 2009, carried out under absurd pretexts, killing civilians, including women and children, using mortal and devastating weapons and defying any call by the international community to stop the bloodshed of innocent people, demonstrated the grave threat posed by such an irresponsible regime. It is needless to say how much nuclear weapons in the hands of such a regime could endanger the regional and international peace and security.

13. Unfortunately, the inaction imposed upon the Security Council over the past several decades in addressing the well-documented illicit nuclear weapons programme of the Zionist regime has given the audacity to this regime to explicitly acknowledge possession of nuclear weapons, as was divulged by the Israeli Prime Minister in an interview on German television on 12 December 2006, in contradiction to the long-sought idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Moreover, this regime's clandestine development and possession of nuclear weapons not only violate basic principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the NPT and numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, but they also clearly defy the demands and concerns of the overwhelming majority of the United Nations Member States, in constant and obstinate disregard of the international community, which has, time and again, called on this regime to renounce nuclear weapons and accede to the NPT.

14. Considering the above-mentioned reasons, the Security Council should have fulfilled its Charter-based responsibility to address such a clear and serious threat to international peace and security and take prompt and appropriate actions accordingly. The Zionist regime is the only obstacle to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Peace and stability cannot be achieved

in the Middle East while the massive nuclear arsenal of that regime continues to threaten the region and beyond.

International measures

15. The Islamic Republic of Iran, in a positive response to the invitation of the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties, has lent its unreserved support for the early establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons, and has spared no effort to achieve this invaluable objective.

16. The decision of the 2000 NPT Review Conference reaffirms the political will of the international community regarding the importance of the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East.

17. The idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone as an important disarmament and confidence-building measure in the region of the Middle East was first initiated by Iran in 1974, followed by the adoption of the resolution by the General Assembly. Since 1980, the General Assembly has annually adopted, by consensus, a resolution on this issue. The repeated adoption of this resolution by the General Assembly is a manifestation of the global support for the promotion of peace, security and stability in the Middle East through the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

18. As a State party to the NPT, the Islamic Republic of Iran is fully committed to its international undertakings and believes that this international instrument is the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Universal adherence to this Treaty, particularly in the region of the Middle East, would effectively ensure the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

19. The 2000 Review Conference reaffirmed the importance of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Due to the significant provisions of this resolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran and other States in the region would expect that resolution to be swiftly implemented, especially by its co-sponsors, i.e. the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Northern Ireland, as depositories of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

20. The Islamic Republic of Iran, in its bilateral and multilateral disarmament dialogues with other member States and, in particular, with some nuclear-weapons States and members of the European Union, has always urged their active and non-discriminatory contributions towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

The way ahead

21. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the opinion that, pending the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, no country in the region should develop, produce or test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or permit the stationing on their territories, or territories under their control, of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices, and they should refrain from actions that run counter to both the letter and spirit of the NPT and other international resolutions and documents relating to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

22. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the NPT Review Conferences have a significant role in the realization of such a zone in the Middle East. Such a zone should be realized through the establishment of a special body in the Review Conferences that would consider and recommend proposals for the introduction of ways and means, in terms of concrete recommendations, for urgent and practical steps for the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

23. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the firm belief that an agreed plan of action and timetable for universality of the NPT, especially in the Middle East, should be a top priority on the agenda of all States parties to the Treaty, especially the nuclear-weapon States. There should be enough pressure on the Zionist regime to accede to the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards to pave the way for the long-sought-after goal of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

24. Finally, the unconditional adherence by that regime to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the conclusion of a full-scope safeguard agreement with IAEA would, undoubtedly, lead to the early realization of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Japan

[Original: English]
[26 June 2009]

1. Japan supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the regions concerned and on the condition that the establishment of such zones would contribute to regional stability and security.

2. Lack of progress in the establishment of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East poses a serious concern. Japan supported, and continues to fully support, the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which calls for the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) — nuclear, chemical and biological — and their delivery systems. Japan believes that progress in the establishment of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East will further strengthen the credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Following the previous sessions, Japan again joined, at the sixty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly, the consensus adoption of resolution 63/38 of 2 December 2009, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East".

3. The establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East will ultimately require the adherence by all States in the region to the NPT, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by all States in the region would also be a substantial and practical step towards this end. Japan has been actively taking part in the international efforts to encourage the universal adherence to these multilateral instruments on the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. As part of such endeavours, Japan supported the resolution (GC

(52)/res/15) entitled "Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East" at the fifty-second regular session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from 29 September to 4 October 2008. Furthermore, Japan on various occasions urged the Israeli Government to become a Party to the NPT, the BWC and the CWC, as well as to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible. Japan has also urged other Middle Eastern countries to join at the earliest date the relevant WMD-related treaties to which they are not Parties in order to foster an environment conducive to the creation of a WMD-free zone in the region.

4. It is imperative that compliance with those legal instruments should be fully assured. Japan has urged the Iranian Government to comply with the requirements of all the relevant International Atomic Energy Agency Board resolutions and United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding Iran's nuclear programme, including the suspension of all enrichment-related activities and the ratification and implementation of the Additional Protocol. In this context, Japan also stresses the necessity of strengthening the IAEA safeguards system, which plays a vital role in underpinning the NPT. Japan strongly believes that the conclusion of the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols by all States in the region is essential for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Japan, with the aim of achieving universal adherence to the comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols, is ready to share its expertise and to provide technical assistance to those interested States in the region.

5. Japan is firmly committed to supporting the Middle East peace process, considering that it is a key for regional stability, which is a vital factor in establishing a foundation for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Based on the recognition that the only way to achieve peace in the Middle East is through the realization of the peaceful coexistence between the two States of Israel and Palestine, Japan has been making its utmost efforts to that end. In particular, Japan has been promoting the following measures:

(1) Japan maintains high-level political dialogues with both Israel and the Palestinian Authority in order to encourage them to advance the peace process. For instance, Ambassador Tatsuo Arima, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for the Middle East, visited Israel and the Palestinian territories in May 2009, in order to work with high-level officials of the relevant parties to play a responsible role in enhancing the Middle East peace process based on the two-state solution;

(2) Japan has been actively involved in assisting the Palestinians since the Oslo Accords of 1993. As of March 2009, Japan has disbursed a total of more than 1 billion United States dollars in assistance to the Palestinians. In response to the situation in Gaza, January 2009, Japan immediately implemented about 11 million United States dollars of emergency humanitarian assistance, including in kind assistance to afflicted people in Gaza. On 2 March 2009, in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on the occasion of the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza, Japan pledged 200 million United States dollars in assistance to the Palestinians in the coming years, including humanitarian assistance and early recovery at a scale of 60 million United States dollars for people in Gaza;

(3) The Government of Japan has actively been initiating and sponsoring various projects that will contribute to confidence-building between the Israelis and the Palestinians. In addition to that, Japan, based on its efforts in the fields

mentioned above, is promoting the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative through regional cooperation among Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Jordan and Japan, as its mid- and long-term effort to generate hope and trust among the peoples in the region for future coexistence between Israel and Palestine and for their mutual prosperity.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[31 March 2009]

- It does not possess weapons of mass destruction and does not accept the legality of the threat on use of such weapons.
- It abides by United Nations resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and is cooperative in respect of weapons of mass destruction disarmament. It is gravely concerned by Israel's failure, by maintaining a nuclear arsenal, to submit to international legitimacy. That arsenal poses a threat to all States in the region and consequently to international peace and security.
- It supports and welcomes all initiatives aimed at achieving general disarmament and, in particular, attaining that goal in the Middle East, stressing the role of the United Nations in that regard.
- It has promulgated laws and regulations that permit the monitoring of the export and cross-border transport of any type of weapon of mass destruction and appurtenances.
- It does not provide assistance of any kind to groups attempting to purchase, acquire, manufacture, transport, borrow or use nuclear or other weapons.
- It supports Arab conferences and initiatives aimed at eliminating factors that contribute to tension in the Middle East, particularly with respect to ridding the region of weapons of mass destruction. It also participates actively in all meetings of the technical committee that is involved in drafting a treaty to make the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and, above all, nuclear weapons, and emphasizes the dangers posed by Israeli weapons of mass destruction to international peace and Arab national security.

Mali

[Original: French]
[9 April 2009]

The Government of Mali expresses its solidarity with all action taken by the Organization of the Islamic Conference in implementation of resolution 63/38 entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East".

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[3 June 2001]

1. Our country promotes the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world as a mechanism that will help to strengthen the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime.

2. As proof of Mexico's commitment to the issue, our country has pushed for the convening of the second Conference of the States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, which will be held in New York prior to the Review Conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

3. Mexico supports the adoption of resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Our country supported the adoption without a vote of resolution 63/38 in the First Committee of the General Assembly and the adoption as drafted of the resolution entitled "Application of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards in the Middle East" (GOV/2008/29-GC (52)/10), at the 52nd session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), held in Vienna in September 2008.

Nicaragua

[Original: Spanish]
[6 March 2009]

1. Nicaragua shares the view that international disarmament norms are of vital importance for sustainable development, quality of life and, ultimately, the survival of the planet. Weapons of mass destruction pose a threat to international peace and security.

2. As a State Party to NPT, Nicaragua recognizes the three pillars upon which the international instrument is based, namely, preventing new States from acquiring or developing nuclear weapons, fostering peaceful uses of nuclear energy and urgently promoting nuclear disarmament.

3. In that regard, Nicaragua fully supports and considers the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones a positive step towards strengthening the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and a substantial step towards comprehensive nuclear disarmament. Article VII of the Treaty, the provisions of the Final Document adopted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and the principles adopted by the Disarmament Committee of the United Nations in 1999 encourage States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones as an effective contribution to strengthening regional and global peace and security.

4. A nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has been deemed a priority and a necessity in various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the IAEA General Conference, as well as in Security Council resolution 687 (1991); those resolutions reflect the international consensus on disarmament and on the

importance of universal implementation of NPT. Israel is the only country in the region that has not acceded to NPT.

5. In a statement made on German television on 11 December 2006, the Prime Minister of Israel confirmed that his country possessed nuclear weapons. Israel has not declared its intention to accede to the Treaty, nor has it agreed to subject its nuclear installations to the IAEA Safeguards regime or give up its nuclear arsenal. Its position poses a threat to other countries in the region and adversely affects prospects for international peace, security, stability and efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.

6. Nicaragua urges all countries in the region, including Israel, as a first step towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone, to declare their support for the creation of such a zone, as stipulated in paragraph 63, subparagraph (d) of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly and deposit their declarations with the Security Council.

7. The establishment of that nuclear-weapon-free zone would constitute a fundamental contribution to the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament, as well as a major step towards reliable peace and security in the Middle East.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[13 April 2009]

1. Qatar has on several occasions insisted upon the necessity of making the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Those occasions include the following:

- The statement made by the chairman of the National Commission at the twenty-fourth meeting held at the Arab League headquarters in order to follow up Israeli nuclear activity in contravention of NPT.
- The academic conference held at the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy in London entitled "A Middle East Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction".
- The statement made by the Chairman of the Commission at the 2010 NPT Review Conference PrepCom meeting, held in Geneva in April 2008.
- Its endorsement of Arab League Council resolution 386 on the development of a unified Arab position on practical measures to be taken towards making the Middle East a region free from nuclear weapons.

2. At the twenty-first regular Arab summit, held in Doha on 30 March 2009, the Arab countries called upon the international community to work towards ridding the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons; to take steps towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which will contribute to international peace and security; and to compel Israel to sign NPT and subject all its nuclear materials and activities to IAEA safeguards.

3. At the same time, the Arab summit affirmed that Arab countries have a legitimate right to attempt to obtain nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes in all areas in which such technologies would support their development programmes and economies and permit them to diversify their sources of energy.